# 1939 Castle Chronicle 1939

VOL. MMVII YEAR IN REVIEW

# DEATH VALLEY SCOTTY MOURNS MULE THAT TOTED FORTUNE

## SLIM, 40, VICTIM OF MOUNTAIN LION HAD CARRIED \$1,500,000, SAYS PROSPECTOR

DEATH VALLEY (Cal.) Dec. 16-Death Valley Scotty is sorrowfully alone in the quietude of the desert rocks today. He has lost his closest companion, his favorite old pack mule, Slim.

Slim, forty years old, was victim of a mountain lion.

"She's packed a million and a half in plunder," Scotty used to say, fondling the black mule whose hair was graying. "Guess no other mule has done anything like that. I rode 28,000 miles on her through the rocks."

Today the sixty-two-year-old desert Midas was out alone with Betty, the last of his old string of mules. Betty for fifteen years carried his ammunition and medical supplies on pack journeys through the desolate reaches of Death Valley and its forbidding ranges. She is thirty-eight.

#### ONLY ONE ANSWERS CALL

A few days ago Scott heard a rather weak braying. He had emerged from his hideaway shack to feed Slim and Betty, his morning custom. Betty alone answered his call.

He found Slim down with a torn right hind leg. Then he went to the castle, five miles away, and met his partner, Albert M. Johnson.

"The lions got him," he said. The two partners rode silently down to the shack.

## HANDS GUN TO PARTNER

"It's broke," Johnson said, after inspecting the wound. Scotty, with tears in his eyes, handed his pistol to Johnson, saying quietly: "I won't."

"I'll use my rifle," said Johnson.

He returned a few minutes later, and Scotty, with closed eyes, asked: "Did she suffer?"

"She died instantly," Johnson replied. Scotty remained alone in the shack while Slim's body was dragged away. (New York Post, Dec. 16, 1938)



# FAR AWAY LOOK

There is a far-away look in the eyes of Death Valley Scotty, as with one of his sleek burros, he prepares for another trip into the mysterious desert. "I'll never show my hole card, and they'll be guessing a thousand years after I'm gone," he declares, but admits that with all the road building and surveying, someone may stumble across his hidden mine. He insists that should that happen, he'll be there first. (Philadelphia Inquirer, March 12, 1939)



# SCOTTY'S LIES EXPOSED TRUE OWNER OF 'CASTLE' DISCOVERED!



DEATH VALLEY, CALIFORNIA - Death Valley Scotty has made headlines of this and other newspapers across America for decades. Walter "Scotty" Scott splashed into the news with his record-breaking Coyote Special train run back in 1905. Then came spectacular stories of a leviathan gold mine and Old West-style gun fights. In 1922 Scotty started building a \$2 million castle in northern Death Valley. But now reporters from this newspaper have discovered the truth behind these stories: these publicity stunts were staged by Scotty and his ghostly backers for reasons of their own self-interest.

As a former bronco rider with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show, Scotty knows how to spin a yarn. If you ask him how he found his gold mine, he's not likely to give you a straight answer. "Now, no one has ever accused me of being superstitious, or believing in spirits, or other things of a like nature," said Scotty, "but when I saw Death Valley for the first time a strange feeling came over me. This place so avoided by everybody, whose very name made so many shudder, attracted me. To be plain, I felt that it was to be, some way, instrumental in bringing about a great fortune for me."

By 1902, Scotty was flashing samples of high-grade gold ore from his secret Death Valley gold mine to potential investors. Where did the ore samples really come from? Mrs. Ella Scott, Scotty's estranged wife, claims Scotty's gold came from a tour she took in a Cripple Creek, Colorado mine in 1902. The mine superintendent gave her two chunks of gold ore as a souvenir. Later she showed them to her husband and, according to Mrs. Scott, "His eyes popped out a foot, but he said nothing."

Mr. Julian Gerard, a prominent New York banker, was impressed by Scotty's ore samples and stories. Mr. Gerard invested a grubstake of almost \$10,000 in Scotty's mine prospect. Mr. Gerard had purchased a partnership in Scotty's gold mine—yet he never received any gold or other return on his investment. Mr. Gerard remembers with frustration the letters he received from Scotty.

One letter he showed this reporter reads, "I walked 145 miles. Had no jack. Lost two outfits in a cloudburst. I never saw such mountains of water in all my life. . . . I got caught in a long canyon and about four in the morning a wall of water came down and took everything. I just barely got out myself. Send more coin."

Mr. Gerard remembers Scotty's protests that everything in those days was on the level. "When I get ready to rob a man," wrote Scotty, "I will take out a gun and do it in a business way."

Just as Mr. Gerard started doubting the truth of Scotty's gold mine, characters behind the scenes started to benefit from the public's trust in Scotty. Readers might recall when Scotty broke the land speed record on the 'Coyote Special' in 1905. People have wondered whether the Santa Fe Railroad sponsored that as advertising. The truth appears to be even more devious. A mining investor named Mr. E. Burdon Gaylord provided the \$5,500 for the stunt in vain hopes that it would increase the value of his Death Valley Big Bell Mine.

Another secret collaborator during Scotty's early fame was Mr. Van Loan, a reporter for Mr. Hearst's Los Angeles Examiner. After Scotty was arrested on suspicion of robbing the Wells Fargo stage in 1904, it was Mr. Van Loan who sprung Scotty from jail. What interest would a reporter have with Scotty? Mr. Van Loan reported stories of Scotty's gold mine, gun fights, and defense against robbers as if they were reputable bits of news. Readers, rest assured that this reporter will never stoop to that level! Our paper has no need of such tactics to increase circulation.

Tourists traveling to the Death Valley National Monument today can tour Scotty's Castle for \$1.10. A casual tour can hint at the truth that this Spanish-style structure doesn't really belong to Scotty. The sign over the door reads "Death Valley Ranch" and numerous items around the property are marked with an "S" and a "J".

Who is this mysterious "J"? Could it be millionaire Mr. Albert Johnson? Mr. Johnson seems to be a very sly cat. When questioned by reporters, he responds, "My business with Death Valley Scotty? Oh, I'm only his banker."

Who is this "banker"? Mr. Johnson. born to a wealthy family in Ohio, increased his fortune by smart investments in mines and the Chicago-based National Life Insurance Company. Today he is largely retired. Invo County records show 65-yearold Mr. Albert Johnson as the true owner of the beautiful Death Valley Ranch. This is a curiosity, since Mr. Johnson also invested in Scotty's gold mine. Just like Mr. Gerard, he never received any shipments of gold. Yet in spite of this, he allows Scotty to claim his Death Valley Ranch is "Scotty's

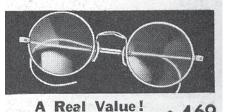
What makes Scotty's relationship with Johnson so different from his with Gerard? Johnson's former business associate, Mr. Alfred MacArthur has an opinion as to what Mr. Johnson gets out of his investments in Scotty. Before the Great Depression, "Johnson's income must have been \$700,000 or \$800,000 a year, so what the hell! He didn't spend as much money on Scott as a man with that sort of income would spend on an ordinary hobby, and he considered that he got a lot of action for his money."

Upon direct questioning about Scotty pulling the wool over his eyes, Mr. Johnson admitted, "All Scotty showed me were a few dry holes." But, Mr. Johnson explained, "Scott has repaid me every dimein laughs. Plus, he's a darn good cook."

Lately, Scotty's past shenanigans have been coming back to bite him. Mrs. Scott sued him for \$1,000 per month in separate maintenance in 1937. Unfortunately for her, Scotty was found to have no gold mine, or any other assets, worth suing for. Mr. Gerard is likely to be the next one to bring Scotty to court. Mr. Van Loan and Mr. Gaylord have long since moved on from their involvements with Scotty. By contrast, Mr. Johnson has been backing Scotty for decades now.

Dear reader, perhaps even more surprising is Mrs. Bessie Penniman Johnson's support of Scotty's illusions. Mrs. Johnson has been known to fire employees at Death Valley Ranch for doing just a fraction of the things Scotty does. What does this devote Christian lady get out of Scotty's deceptions? The Johnsons first came to Death Valley, a place they might never have visited, because of Scotty's elusive gold mine. Mrs. Johnson defends the desert's beauty. "You may have your cities and electric lights." movies, dancing parties, and surging crowds; but for a thrill, an emotion, a sense of peace, and a confidence in a God who cares, give me moonlight in the desert" she

And so it seems the myths surrounding Scotty, his gold mine, and his Castle have served several behind-the-scenes characters. Most people were looking for Scotty's gold, but Mr. and Mrs. Johnson have found entertainment, relaxation, and a beautiful desert retreat. A. Snow - NPS, 2007



A Real Value! Fancy-Chased Frames

VOL. MMVII

# DEATH VALLEY SCOTTY TELLS GALS EVERYTHING BUT WHAT THEY ASK HIM

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 15 AP – Thirty-five debutantes of California pioneer families caught and quizzed the famous Midas desert rat, Death Valley Scotty.

They placed the 63 year-old blue-eyed mystery man on the witness stand, an overstuffed easy chair, spreading themselves in a circle on the floor around him. They bent their eager, youthful energies to ferreting out secrets which have mystified the world years before these girls were born.

They perform an intellectual dissection each week on some notable visitor in the Southland.

The secretive burro man who says he has spent \$8,000,000 since the Tonopah gold field rush, and built a \$2,381,000 castle in Death Valley beamed and told stories of fascinating adventures.

"Where is your gold mine?" Quizzed one of the girls.

"On a bluff in the desert," the cagey prospector replied

"Why did you build your castle?"

Wal, I knew Bill Rogers forty years. Long ago when he was a cowboy. One time up at the castle he asked me that question. "I'll tell you, Bill, I says, when you die they'll be asking people to contribute for a monument. But Bill, this here's mine, the castle. This monument outta last a thousand years."

"What do you do in the castle? Don't you get thrills all the time about it?

"Wal, pet, you ain't married are you? But you will be getting underway some day and spend a couple of years working hard to catch the feller. Then after you're hitched some day you'll wake up and look at him there asleep and ask yourself "Why did I work like a mule for this?" That's the way with me and the castle. It's there and I just don't pay much attention to it.

## THE GIRLS SERVED TEA.

"Why do you do the sensational things you do?" asked Miss Joyce Alderman.

"Why do you kiss the feller you like?" Scotty always has the trigger-quick mental drop on anyone he is with. Before she realized it Miss Alderman replied:

"Because I like to—oh my, I'm always making breaks!"

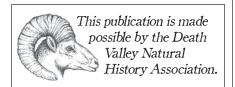
"You got it, that's it! Scotty said consolingly.

"Tell us about your castle, it is so thrilling." Said Yvette Wilcox, hostess.

"Wal, girls, I'll tell ya while ya eat. I aplannin' and a-buildin' it. I shouldn't be spendin' the rest of my life talkin' about it. You're all welcome to come up and see it. I'll feed and water you."

And he left the girls more mystified than when he stepped into their curious circle.

(Associated Press, 1939)



From the Editor: All newspaper articles and advertisements used in this publication are from 1938 and 1939 and are reproduced with the same spelling, grammar, and punctuation as the original.

Editor: Debbie Wehmeyer, NHA; and the staff of Scotty's Castle 9/07

# "SEE THE WEST IN '39"

#### THAT'S THE SPIRIT BEHIND THE GOLDEN GATE INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION

MAYBE you've noticed them.

Why sure all those out-of-State automobile licenses. It's getting so bad that the home guard is having real difficulty parking without mashing the fender of a visitor's buggy. What's behind it all?

California offers too much in the way of scenery, glamour and good living. Visitors from all over the world are viewing its wonders. They come to see the giant redwoods, the cities, the beaches and the famous mountains.

This year the Golden Gate International Exposition, holds still greater promise for the State. Nearly forty thousand miles of paved dustless highways have built a new West. National parks are easy and pleasant of access, and farms are only a few swift moments from markets. Transportation is not the only factor that has drawn a new industrial map. In the mountains are huge water projects and floods of economical electrical energy will have an almost unlimited effect upon agriculture and industry. Taking notice of this significant trend the Golden Gate Fair will explore mechanical progress and industrial horizons fully. Since electricity is doing the work and distribution is constantly more efficient, human leisure is greatly increased and the trend is toward still more leisure. How better may this leisure be employed than in giving way to the age old urge to travel, to see strange new sights and relax in an atmosphere alien to the cares of the day?

So the Golden Gate International Exposition will be a "travel" fair, assembling the vacation land resources of the west and displaying them as a rich background for the industrial progress that makes them more easily available.

"Be the Guest of the West in 39" is the invitation.

The fair promoters realizing this, have wisely adopted this trend to the Exposition. Vacationland, a unique exhibit building that will "bring all outdoors under one roof," will make the visitor anxious to return again and again to the west

Facilities that make travel easy, destinations that make travel worthwhile, and the whole calendar of regional sports will be dramatized in the huge structure on Treasure Island.

The Fair with it's slogan, "See all the West in 39" is expected by Exposition officials and leaders of all Western States to bring about the greatest westward tourist travel in history! (Los Angeles Times Feb. 2, 1939)

# DFIELD GROCERY On Sale This Week SHOP AT OUR STORE AND SAVE ON THE ITEMS BELOW: Sunbright Cleanser ...... 4¢ Paper Towels ...... 4¢ JUMBO SLICED LOAF OF BREAD.......5¢ WISK BROOM ...... 5¢ Pocket Shoe Duster......7¢ Curl Comb ...... 7¢ IVORY SOAP ...... 5 1/2¢ Paper Napkins ...... 500 for 17¢ SOAP BOXES ...... 17¢ Sun Glasses ...... 19¢ Pocket Knife ......23¢ CHAMOIS SKIN ......33¢ Tooth Brush......39¢ OBERON PARFUM ......25¢ Lapel Watch......69¢ SPAM (NEW FROM HORMEL).....29¢

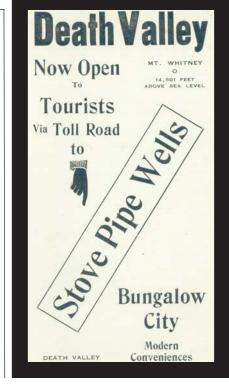
# RAINS CREATE LAKE IN DEATH VALLEY

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 23—National Park Service officials in the regional office here announced today overflow waters of the Amargosa River have made a new lake covering "tens of square miles" in the arid Death Valley National Monument region of Southern California.

The annual rainfall in Death Valley is normally only 1.47 inches. This year more than that had fallen in the early part of the winter season, and the Amargosa, usually a dry bed, has been a rushing stream.

Wild flowers in the valley are expected to be unusually profuse this year with displays reaching their peak in March and April.

(Los Angeles Times, Feb. 23, 1939)



# SCOTTY DRIVES 10 HOURS TO GET CANDY FOR DOG

#### DESERT MIDAS FEASTS ON OYSTERS WHEN HE VISITS COAST.

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 6. (AP) —He drove 10 hours to get some candy for his dog. Death Valley Scotty, for 35 years mystery midas of the ghost town Goldfields, visited the city for the first time in eight months, and feasted on half a dozen fried oysters.



#### HE SCRATCHES DOG

"Queenie needed some candy and cake," the 62-year old prospector explained, scratching - the ears of his fat yellow cur. "That's why we're here."

"Queenie looks over-exercised," the reporter remarked, facetiously.

"Wal," Scotty replied, "I'll tell you something. First thing to do. When you git to a place is look at the dog and the cook. If they're fat you kin bet the grub's good and all's well.

## QUEENE FANCY EATER

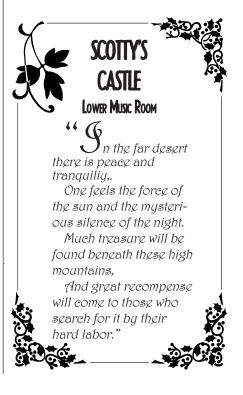
"Queenie, here, is the best rattlesnake and rat hound I've ever seen. She's killed 125 rattlers I know of. She kin sniff rattlers and rats yards away, and will tear up a shack to get "em."

"Does she eat them?"

"What? Queenie? Why not on yer life! She jest breaks their backs and tosses 'em over her head. Queenie's a fancy eater. She likes cake and candy."

The blue-eyed, silver-buckled, ten gallon hatted, cheerful prospector stepped on his auto starter button. Then he fed the yellow dog another of the dollar-apound bittersweet chocolates. As he let in the clutch for his dash back to the desert rocks of Last Chance Range, he sallied: "She sure's a smart dog. She never chases cats."

(Associated Press, 1939)



VOL. MMVII

# WEDDING SCENE SET IN DESERT



**ROMANTIC PAIR**... The million-dollar castle in Death Valley of Walter "Death Valley" Scott is all in readiness for the wedding there of his attorney, Joseph Choate (left) of Los Angeles, and Miss Dorothy Drew (right), native of Boston, shown with Scotty's partner, A. M. Johnson, at the latter's Hollywood, Calif., home. Scotty will be best man, and Johnson will give the bride away.

DEATH VALLEY, CALIFORNIA --There's a wedding today in Death Valley Scotty's castle. The genial mystery prospector prowled around at dawn, feeding his mules before giving attention to feedin' and waterin' the hundred guests. Music Swells Ar

Music swelled in the quiet desert air from the carillon tower and the great organ.

Dorothy Drew, musician and writer, kin of William Cullen Bryant and Oliver Wendell Holmes, is the bride-to-be. The bride-groom-elect is Joseph Choate, attorney, kin of the late diplomat and famous speaker of the same name.

With the bridal couple was Carrie Jacobs Bond, famous composer, who will participate in the elaborate and unusual wedding ceremony and render a number of her compositions.

Miss Drew is the daughter of the late Arthur F. and Harriett Drew of Boston, where she was born.

Death Valley Scotty invited a hundred guests to the ceremony. He will stand up with the groom, who is his attorney, and Scotty's partner, A. M. Johnson, will give the bride away. The ceremony will be held in the \$200,000 music room of the castle. (Ogden StandardExaminer May 3, 1939)

At Your Grocer's While They Last...
THIS LOVELY, GENUINE

Gay Rainbow Milk and Cream Pitcher

This Offer Made Solely to Induce You to Try Delicious KIX in its Sensational New

3-in-One "KRISP-A-SURED" Package

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TO OBTAIN FREE PITCHER DO THIS: mortically sealed with so unabroken in of wate. A simple enough idea...yet lie

price ... not receive your ear relations of Picho as a place difference of the matter.

You'll find this growth Gay Elimbur Milk and Cream Pitcher is of bordy and working diffe synthere exceeded, and you and your whole exceeded, and you and your whole exceeded and provided the proposed of the proposed

enry to get you in try KSN inco.

SMART

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She Never Missed

a BARGAIN!

**EXCLUSIVE!** 

# Wonderful LAND of OZ!

Its proud spires and mighty battlements... carved from a single gleaming jewel... towering against purple skies!

Peopled with wondrous wizards and wicked witches... Giant Winkies... Half-Pint Munchkins... and maidens lovelier than this poor world may ever behold!

Home of the Cowardly Lion... the Jitterbug Scarecrow... the Tin Woodman... the flying monkeys... the lavender horses... and a thousand and one other wonders!

Where you get up at noon, go to work at one, take an hour for lunch and quit at two!

The most amazing empire ever conceived in the mind of man... Now actually created on the screen... before your very eyes... in all its splendor and magnificence! (Los Angeles Times, Aug. 18, 1939)



Movies- with candy & cartoons	
Kids	15 <b>¢</b>
Adults	25¢

GORGEOUS COLORS

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MEDALITY

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ACADEMY AWARDS

Walt Disney and presenter Shirley Temple with his unusual 1938 Oscar for Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

HOLIYWOOD, CALIFORNIA - The 1938 Academy Awards were presented Feb. 23, 1939 at the Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles. A special award was presented to Walt Disney for Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, recognized as a significant screen innovation which has charmed millions and pioneered a great new entertainment field for the motion picture cartoon. Other awards were as follows:

BEST PICTURE OF 193&

You Can't Take It With You

BEST ACTOR:

Spencer Tracy (Boys Town) BEST ACTRESS:

Bette Davis (Jezebel) BEST DIRECTOR:

Frank Capra (You Can't Take It With You)

BEST SHORT SUBJECT: Ferdinand the Bull (Walt Disney)

Walt Disney (Snow White)

**Books:** Grapes of Wrath, Day of the Locust, The Big Sleep **Music:** Deep Purple, In the Mood, Jeepers Greepers.

The Green Hornet, The Shadow, Amos and Andy





and the same Super-Coach travel-ease to v tion spots in every part of this great na and in Canada. Best for business trips,



Plays

**Anywhere** 





# **Death Valley National Park**

# LIVING HISTORY

Welcome to Scotty's Castle and your 1939 living history program.

Your ranger (dressed in 1939 period costume) will unveil the rich history of Death Valley Ranch, better known as Scotty's Castle. While you are here, you will explore the lives of Walter Scott (Death Valley Scotty), Albert and Bessie Johnson.

- Who built the castle?
- Why would anyone build here?
- Who was Scotty?



Take a trip back in time and find out. Your ranger will turn back the clock to the year 1939 and YOU are there!

Perhaps you might remember 1939. Even if you don't remember 1939, your living history program will present life as it related to the Johnsons and Scotty, world events, national concerns, local situations and issues, affecting Scotty's Castle.

# **PROGRAMS**

#### Main House Program

Ranger guided costumed living history program. First floor is wheelchair accessible. There are no self-guided tours inside the castle. 1st and 2nd floor living quarters. 50-60 minutes

#### DAILY TIMES:

9:00am - 5:00pm Winter Hours 9:30am - 4:00pm Summer Hours See ticket office for next available program. Limited to 19 people.

#### UNDERGROUND MYSTERIES **Program**

Ranger guided program that takes you beneath the Castle and introduces you to the technology that allowed Death Valley Ranch to be self-sufficient. Learn how the Castle was heated and cooled and how alternative energies were used. Not wheelchair accessible. There is no self-guided tour of the basement, wearing of hard-hat is required, and no children under 6 are allowed. Basement, tunnels, powerhouse. 60-70 minutes

#### **DAILY TIMES:**

15 people

See ticket office for available times. Limited to 15 people.

#### LOWER VINE RANCH

Ranger guided hike that takes you from Ubehebe Crater Road to Lower Vine Ranch, which was Scotty's cabin. Not wheelchair accessible. No self-guided hikes. 21/2 hours, 2 mile hike, offered on special weekends from November to April. Reservations recommended. Limited to

# GROUNDS PROGRAM

Inquire at Visitor Center

#### CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

(MESQUITE SPRINGS CAMPGROUND) Inquire at Visitor Center

## **TICKETS**

#### TICKET OFFICE HOURS:

8:30am - 5:00pm Winter Hours Summer Hours 9:00am - 4:00pm Please purchase tickets as soon as you arrive. Expect one to two hour waits during husy times weekends or holidays

busy times,	weekends of nondays.
\$11.00	Adults
\$ 9.00	Seniors 62 or older
\$ 6.00	Children 6-15
Froo Childre	n () 5

FreeChildren 0-5 \$ 6.00 ...... Golden Access Combine house and underground and save

# **GROUNDS**

The Castle grounds and picnic area are open from 7:00am to 5:30pm in the summer and 7:00am to 6:00pm in the winter. Overnight camping is not allowed.

# **SERVICES**

#### VISITOR CENTER

\$2 per person.

Winter Hours 8:30am - 5:30pm Summer Hours 9:00am - 4:30pm Wheelchairs may be available upon request.

No Gasoline or Lodging

# **HELP US PROTECT** THE CASTLE

Scotty's Castle is lavishly decorated with Spanish and Italian antiques, leather furniture, hand carved redwood beams, and iron chandeliers. Custom crafted tile floors are covered with handmade Spanish Majorcan rugs. All furnishings are original. You can help preserve and protect Scotty's Castle.

#### Please:

- Do not sit on, touch, or pick up any museum object
- Do not walk on historic carpets
- No eating, drinking or chewing
- No liquids or water bottles
- No backpacks or camera bags
- No strollers
- No smoking within 30 feet of any historic building

# PHOTOGRAPHY

- Cameras and flash photography are allowed
- Video photography is allowed Tripods are not allowed

# **CONTACT US**

Scotty's Castle, Death Valley National Park PO Box 569 Death Valley, CA 92328 (760)786-2392 www.nps.gov/deva

